

SAFETY AT WORK

Permit-Required Confined Spaces

29 CFR 1910.146

What is a Confined Space?

A confined space is a space that :

1. Is large enough so all or part of your body can get in to do work.
2. Has limited means of getting in and out (you can't just walk out).
3. Is not designed for continuous human occupancy.

If a confined space does not contain any of the safety or health hazards listed below (i.e. there is NO WAY that any hazards capable of causing a serious injury or death are in the space) OSHA does not require you to follow a confined space plan.

BUT, if a confined space also ...

Contains or has the potential to contain **1)** a hazardous atmosphere, **2)** a material that could engulf a person, **3)** an internal configuration that narrows down to a small area where a person could be trapped or asphyxiated, or **4)** contains any other recognized serious safety or health hazard...

...you must follow a written permit-required confined space program and use a permit when entering the space for any reason!



What is involved in a permit-required confined space program?

- 1) Make sure you know **all** the hazards that may be in the space you are entering.
 - Bad air or chemicals in the space,
 - Electrical & mechanical hazards,
 - Substances that can engulf or trap an entrant in the space.
- 2) Develop procedures for safely entering and performing work in permit spaces.
 - Specify what entry conditions will be acceptable and verify that the space is safe before entry,
 - Isolate the space from all sources of energy, chemicals, etc.
 - Develop procedures to control atmospheric hazards,
 - Develop procedures to work with other employers in a space.
- 3) Develop a permit system for all entries.
 - A system to prepare, issue, use, and cancel permits,
 - A permit that has all the required

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What is involved in a permit-required confined space program? (continued)

- 4) Provide all the necessary equipment to work in the spaces.
 - Testing & monitoring equipment,
 - Ventilating equipment,
 - Personal protective equipment,
 - Communications equipment,
 - Rescue & emergency equipment,
 - Other equipment as necessary.
- 5) Evaluate permit space conditions when entries are made.
 - Test the conditions in the space to determine if acceptable entry conditions exist before entry,
 - Test the conditions throughout the entry.
- 6) Provide at least one attendant outside the space during entries.
 - An attendant must be outside the space for the duration of the entry.
- 7) Designate the persons who will have responsibilities during permit-space entries and train them.
 - Identify the duties of all authorized entrants, attendants, entry supervisors, persons who test the atmosphere and operate other equipment,
 - Train these persons in the details and procedures of their responsibilities during entries.
- 8) Develop procedures for summoning rescue and emergency services.
 - Arrange for trained rescue and emergency services to be available throughout all entries.
- 9) Review the program annually and revise it to ensure the safety of everyone involved in confined space entries.
 - Use cancelled permits from the past year to monitor, review, and revise the program to ensure employees are being protected from the hazards.

What training is required to work in a permit-required confined space?

Everyone involved with an entry must be trained in the following:

- What hazards may be faced during entry,
- How to identify the signs and symptoms, of exposure to hazards in the space,
- The consequences of exposure to hazards in the space,
- How to properly use all equipment involved in the entry,
- How to communicate with the attendants and entrants involved in the entry,
- When to alert the entrant or attendant that something may be wrong,
- When exit from the space is required and how to signal that exit.

In addition to the training listed above, the attendants must be trained in the following:

- What possible behavioral effects may result from exposure to the hazards,
- How to continually maintain an accounting of who is in the space,
- How to monitor the activities inside and outside the space to determine if it is still safe to continue the entry,
- How to summon rescue and emergency services,
- How to perform non-entry rescue.

In addition, entry supervisors must be trained in the following:

- How to verify that the permit has been completed correctly and that all hazards have been controlled before allowing entry to begin,
- When and how to cancel the permit,
- How to verify that rescue and emergency services are available and that the means for summoning them are operable,
- How to determine that acceptable entry conditions are maintained throughout the entry.